

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 993

CS 502 716

AUTHOR Smith, Robert M.
TITLE The University and Part-Time Faculty: An Interdependent Relationship.
PUB DATE Nov 79
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (65th, San Antonio, TX, November 10-13, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; *College Faculty; *Faculty College Relationship; Higher Education; *Part Time Teachers; *Personal Growth; Teacher Employment; University Administration

ABSTRACT

Arguing for recognition of the interdependent relationship between the university and the part-time faculty member, this paper offers suggestions as to how both can benefit from strategies that make the most of that interdependence. Specifically, it recommends that university administrators take a leadership role in establishing a system of reciprocal agreements--"professional growth contracts"--with part-time staff members. It then proposes a contract form that deals with the selection of part-time faculty, the orientation process for that faculty, steps in its professional development, and its evaluation. (FL)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

The University and Part-Time Faculty:
An Interdependent Relationship

Robert M. Smith
Associate Dean
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas 67208

Association for Communication Administration
San Antonio, Texas
November, 1979

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Robert M. Smith

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED178993

C5502716

The University and Part-Time Faculty: An Interdependent Relationship

A great deal has recently been written about the plight of the part-time faculty person. Indeed, the issues related to that person's status are significant and increasingly important to the future of all of us in higher education. The purpose of this article is to develop an argument for recognizing the interdependent relationship between the university and the part-timer and to suggest how both parties can benefit from strategies that maximize this interdependence.

For the purposes of this discussion, the term "part-time faculty" should be considered in a rather liberal framework. Taylor provides an essentially complete definition of the part-timer to be a person "employed, by contract or appointment, at less than full annual salary and workload considered typical for full-time, or regular teaching or research faculty."¹ In her definition, Taylor would include graduate students and exclude temporary terminal full-time faculty (those without a renewable contract leading to tenure). For this discussion, neither of these qualifications is germane to the central theme. All faculty who have a tenuous appointment and less than a reciprocal career commitment with the institution can be considered part-time. It is the psychological, not the economic, commitment between the person and the institution that makes a difference in their relationship. That relationship is central to the argument and proposal developed in this discussion.

The recent changes in enrollment and funding patterns in higher education have forced universities to adopt more "flexible" personnel profiles. Enrollment is expected to decline for the next twenty years and only occasionally will there be upturns.² Even during those brief times the benefactors are not likely to be universities. Legislators are taking a more critical look at the cost of education and, in response to perceived taxpayer pressures, are demanding more cost-effective measures.³ The response for many universities, short of retrenchment, has been and will continue to be a process of converting tenure positions into a pool of "expendable" faculty who can be brought into or released from the faculty as enrollments and budgets demand.

Over the past several years this pool has grown to rather large proportions. Leslie and Head estimate that fully one-third of the academic work force is comprised of part-time faculty.⁴ In some pockets it is a larger proportion. According to one survey, part-timers already outnumber full-timers in California community colleges.⁵ Tuckman, Caldwell and Vogler, in what may be the most complete survey of part-time faculty, predict that "by 1985, part-timers will represent between 38 percent and 45 percent of all faculty employed in academe...(and)...could comprise between 30 percent to 35 percent of all university faculty employed in 1985."⁶

Not only will the proportion grow but the number of part-time faculty should continue to grow. As institutions expand their employment flexibility they will also expand non-traditional program offerings as a hedge against

enrollment declines. As outreach centers open for classes in sites remote from the main campus and as evening (as well as weekend) offerings expand, the temptation to use available part-time people will be present. In short, the future for part-time employment appears to be bright.

These increased numbers of part-time faculty and their traditionally low status on campuses have created frustrations that are becoming more noticeable and less avoidable. Instead of institutions adapting to the changing nature of their dependency on part-timers and instead of recognizing the changing nature of the type of part-timer they have been attracting as a result of a favorable supply of people (more qualified, better educated and trained), these institutions have retained all of the demoralizing features of part-time employment, (i.e., low pay, no benefits, little recognition, poor status).

The response has been a more active advisarial response from part-time employees. It is not accidental that they are organizing in some areas and are challenging being excluded from faculty unions in many more areas. The entire issue of part-timer participation in unions is only recently emerging. Furthermore, there have been more legal cases involving determination of part-time faculty rights in recent years.⁹ In general, part-time people have become more disenchanted and dissatisfied with their lowly position in the university.¹⁰

What is disappointing about this type of disenchantment is the narrow-mindedness of both parties. The part-time faculty person is willing to work because he or she probably needs or wants the affiliation with the

institution. Tuckman, Caldwell and Vogler identified several types of part-timers in terms of affiliation: Hopeful Full-Timers, Homeworkers (who pursue a parenting role as a full-time responsibility), Part-Mooners (who combine several part-time jobs to yield an equivalent full-time salary), and students who work in departments other than their degree-based department. These four categories accounted for fifty-eight percent of the part-time people in their study.¹¹ Another group, those from outside the academy who are willing to take a part-time assignment to teach a course in their specialized area represent a segment who find satisfaction simply from being able to teach and be involved with campus life.

People see the part-time job as a potential growth opportunity. In a sense, they are independent from the institution in their ability to seek other opportunities but dependent in their hope to accomplish a certain kind of professional growth or development available from the institution. In a similar way, the university shares the same characteristics. The institution has the independence of operating without utilizing part-time people but can achieve a far superior margin of quality by depending on selected part-timers. The institution can gain in many specific ways through the careful utilization of part-time people. In these ways, the two parties are interdependent.

Whether the institution recognizes the value of the part-timer is problematic. Full-timers often feel threatened by the presence of part-timers. They are seen as competition for dollars, even jobs. Moreover, the full-timer may be asked to assume additional non-teaching responsibilities such as advising and committee work because of the "non-participation" of the part-

timer. As Leslie and Head describe the relationship, "full-timers view part-timers as an economic and political threat to their security and well-being."¹²

The interdependent relationship between the university and the part-timer demands that both take a positive and more serious effort to work together to accomplish their goals. Neither should be a threat to the other. This proposal recommends that university administration must take the leadership in establishing a system of reciprocal agreements with part-timers. The initiative for such a system must come from the institution and be based on a sincere desire to contribute to the professional welfare of the part-timer as well as derive services.

The "contract" described here is separate and unlike the part-timer's employment agreement with the Personnel Office. The former is an agreement that the institution will assist the individual achieve certain non-monetary goals including academic support for the part-time teaching assignment. This is a professional development contract. It can and should be initiated and negotiated at the department level. It is specifically designed to be responsive to the part-timer's needs to grow and professionally mature in his or her time with the institution. There are four parts to this proposed contract: selecting, orienting, developing, and evaluating.

Selecting

The process of selecting part-timers is very important to the university. Too often the task is thrust upon the administrator and hiring is quick and sudden. More often the institution does not provide hiring guidelines or policies.¹³ Recruitment is casual and likely to be outside of the preferred Affirmative Action expectations.

The university and especially the department need to establish clear guidelines for hiring part-time people. Even though emergencies arise, policy can be in force to help in deciding who should be hired. Certainly within the policy should be statements about seeking people who meet basic qualifications and whose presence "contributes to the overall institutional mission." Faculty should participate in the selection not only to assure qualifications are satisfied but to also raise a sense of commitment from faculty to the collegial welfare for the part-timer. If faculty participate in the selection of full-time colleagues, they should also participate in the selection of part-time colleagues. It is difficult to establish a relationship between these groups of faculty if they are treated very differently on key matters. Selection is certainly one key area. Overall, the university's hiring policy for part-timers should be philosophically consistent with the policy for full-timers.

The task of selection is not limited to the university point of view. The individual looking for part-time employment should carefully seek a school willing to offer more than a paycheck. Part-timers should not be bashful in proposing "contracts" that lead to professional development such as those proposed here.

Orienting

Part-time faculty need some orientation to the university and their assignment. They are expected to perform and be as knowledgeable as full-time people but are often not given the necessary tools. Part-time people are not always acquainted with the ways of universities.

Any determination of the orientation needs of part-timers must begin with the individual. Generalizations about needs too often miss the target. There may be no more of a diverse group than the part-timers. Assessment of their needs has to reflect their individual backgrounds and assignments. A good guide for conducting assessments is provided by Hammons, Wallace and Watts who suggest a combination of methods including interviews.¹⁴

The interview also allows the department to begin a relationship between the part-timer and a selected full-timer. By establishing one good faculty contact early, the department can begin to foster a mentor relationship --- an important part of successful psychological contracts. The mentor is to serve as a helper for the part-timer. So much of our institution's operations depend on the informal rules that someone has to help introduce them to the new person. However, the mentor should not create a "parent-child" relationship. The task is not to supervise the part-timer.

Once a needs assessment takes place, orientation usually takes one of two forms: handbooks and/or workshops. A number of institutions have adopted handbooks especially for the part-time faculty person.¹⁵ Experience with needs assessment can serve as a guide to common content for a locally developed handbook. Content will depend on local factors but should at least include: procedures to be used during emergencies, academic regulations, academic services, and a list of references for the person to contact in case of special problems.

Workshops have been used in a range of formats. Some have been limited to basic introductions to policies. More successful (and ambitious) workshops have dealt in-depth with pedagogy, instructional style, and complex

issues in higher education.¹⁶ One extensive program operated daily for five weeks.¹⁷ Another program used a strictly self-instructional orientation format.¹⁸ This variety suggests again that local needs and goals should be the guide.

Whatever the format, the orientation process should include periodic follow-up and opportunity for further support. The mentor again serves an important role in not only providing or arranging support but as a channel for the part-timer to request support. The author's recent experience in an empirical study of part-time faculty at a small college underscored the isolation that can be felt by the part-timer. The clear and willing contact from a full-time person on a personal basis is critically important to the ongoing success of the part-timer.

Developing

There are two types of professional development that should be part of the contract. The types are: those efforts to support and develop the part-timer's immediate assignment, and those efforts to support and develop the part-timer's professional/career growth.¹⁹ Both should be commitments from the central administration as part of a university-wide program as well as from the department as a commitment to the person and the discipline.

The institution can make important contributions to the part-timer if it is committed. Without additional costs, it can expand the role of part-time faculty in the decision-making of the university. This person may be a very important liaison not only with a significant group of faculty but with

the community (to the extent part-time people are involved in other professional opportunities in the community). The importance of good communication cannot be understated.

Additionally, part-timers could be used to supplement other part-time assignments in administration. In many ways the institution may feel it is prevented from providing support for part-timers. Nevertheless, a number of "carrots" can be made available from flexible resources if the commitment is there. For example, any of the following opportunities could be very significant for part-time faculty development: tuition-free courses for the individual, special project funds, preferred scheduling of classes, faculty workshops, convention travel, clerical support, office space, parking (our university charges full-time faculty a parking fee but allows part-timers free parking), funding of seminars, computer support, price advantages for sponsored events, acknowledgments and honors, and grant support.

This latter item, grant support, may be one of the most significant (and potentially controversial) suggestions. This author suggests that it may be time to redirect grant support from graduate student support to part-time faculty support. As the academy attempts to respond to the dual needs of part-timers (many who are products of over-productive graduate programs) and retain this country's commitment to academic-based research programs, the time may be to shift funding priorities in our departments and our research personnel practices.²⁰ After all, these graduate programs continued to issue degrees to people prepared for narrow careers long after the market was saturated. These programs still have a responsibility to those people that predates its commitment to new or future graduate students.

One of the most significant actions that can contribute to professional growth and development as well as rewards is to accept the part-time person as a full-time committed professional in the department. Part-timers should be given more opportunities for participation in department activities. In some cases this may require changes in departmental or institutional policies. Often part-time people have been excluded from voting for chairpersons, serving as chair of committees, serving on committees, voting in faculty elections, as well as other exclusions. This may be the time to review these practices.

In reviewing these practices, departments should not overlook the more subtle forms they have used to exclude part-time people from department matters. In the author's study of part-time faculty at a small college, some part-timers did not have mail boxes. Sometimes they are left off of official lists and become excluded from informative mailings. Finally, the practice of scheduling department meetings in mid-afternoon for the exclusive convenience of full-timers serves to disenfranchise part-timers.

Evaluating

If the university is willing to engage in this type of contract, evaluation is a necessity. Evaluation should be considered for the specific assignment as well as professional development commitments beyond that assignment.

The evaluation of the faculty assignment is a measure of accountability often ignored for the part-timer because of his or her short-term commitment.

Nevertheless, it is in the best interests of both to conduct appropriate evaluation through the regular methods used for full-time faculty. Student ratings along with supervisory or peer evaluations have been commonly used.²¹ Self-evaluation and sessions with administrators are other techniques.²² The mentor can perform an important role at this stage.

Regardless of the method, some process of evaluating the assignment and other contracted activities should be introduced and a clear policy established. This should be made clear to the part-timer at the onset of the time period. The policy should offer guidelines for the renewal or nonrenewal of the part-timer. It should delineate the performance expectations and how evidence is to be collected because too often evaluations of the part-timer are anecdotal.²³ In this way the policy should offer protection of the rights of the part-timer as a faculty person.

The concept of the dual contract may first appear as too unique for general application. To the contrary, the stages as defined here can apply as minimal steps in approaching a better and more productive relationship between the university and the part-timer almost without regard to the setting. The contract approach is innovative, possibly idealistic, given the available labor pool and the disposition of administrators. However, it is feasible and a process whose time has come.

The contract method depends on stepping away from an economic model. It requires an institutional belief in people and a commitment to those same values that the university subscribes to in opening doors to students: people

should be given the opportunity to develop their potential. The talent and intellectual power of part-time people is an important long-standing resource for higher education. It should not, like has happened so often to our other resources, be wasted away. The forward thinking departments and institutions will recognize the value of this resource and want to make the best use of it by letting those people make the best use of their skills and talents.

REFERENCES

¹Anita Taylor, "Part-Time Faculty: Problems and Prospects," Association for Communication Administration Bulletin #29, August, 1979, p. 54.

²Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, More Than Survival: Prospects for Education in a Period of Uncertainty (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975); Fishlow, Harriet, "Demography and Changing Enrollments," Declining Enrollments: The Challenge of the Coming Decade, edited by Susan Ambramowitz and Stuart Rosenfeld (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1978), pp. 47-80.

³"Campuses Gird for Consequences of Taxpayer Revolt," The Chronicle of Higher Education, June 19, 1978, pp. 1, 11.

⁴David Leslie and Ronald Head, "Part-Time Faculty Rights," Educational Record, 60 (Winter, 1979), p. 46.

⁵Donald Sewell, et. al., Report on a Statewide Survey About Part-Time Faculty in California Community Colleges (Sacramento: California Community and Junior College Association, January, 1976).

⁶Howard Tuckman, Jaime Caldwell, William Vogler, "Part-Timers and the Academic Labor Market of the Eighties," American Sociologist 13 (November, 1978), p. 185.

⁷Paul Lauter, "The Exploitation of Part-Time Professors," The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 14, 1979, p. 72.

⁸Emily Abel, "Invisible and Indispensable: Part-Time Teachers in California Community Colleges," Community/Junior College Research Quarterly 2 (October-December, 1977), pp. 77-91; "Report of Committee W," AAUP Bulletin 63 (August, 1977), pp. 141-145; Harold Goodwin, Collective Bargaining Perspectives: Part-Time Faculty, (Morgantown, W.V.: West Virginia University, 1977) ED 145753; David Leslie and Ronald Head.

⁹Thomas Fryer, Jr., "Designing New Personnel Policies: The Permanent Part-Time Faculty Member," Journal of College and University Personnel Association 28 (Spring, 1977), pp. 14-21; William Plosser and Joseph Hammel, Temporary, Contract, or Regular? One Year Later, A Second Report About Court Cases Involving the Issues of Status and Pay of Part-Time Faculty in California Community Colleges (Sacramento, Calif.: California Community and Junior College Association, 1977).

- ¹⁰George VanArsdale, "De-Professionalizing a Part-Time Teaching Faculty: How Many, Feeling Small, Seeming Few, Getting Less, Dream of More," American Sociologist 13(November, 1978), 195-201.
- ¹¹Tuckman, Caldwell and Vogler, p. 184.
- ¹²Leslie and Head, p. 50.
- ¹³Gerald Kennedy, A Study of the Recruitment and Orientation Policies and Practices for Part-Time Instructors in the Public Junior Colleges of Illinois and Maryland (College Park, Maryland: University of Maryland, 1969) ED 01278 94.
- ¹⁴Jim Hammons, Terry Wallace and Gordon Watts, "Adjunct Faculty Development," Chapter Four, Staff Development in the Community College: A Handbook (Los Angeles: ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior College, 1978).
- ¹⁵Examples include: Clark Technical College Adjunct Faculty Handbook (Springfield, Ohio: Clark Technical College, 1977) ED 144647; Part-Time Faculty Handbook (Rockville, Maryland: Montgomery College, 1976) ED 112980.
- ¹⁶Thomas Maher and James Ebben, "The Margin of Quality: Selection and Evaluation of Part-Time Faculty," in Employing Part-Time Faculty, David Leslie (ed.) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978) pp. 73-88.
- ¹⁷D.B. Gowin and G.H. Diagneault, The Part-Time College Teacher (Chicago: Center for the Liberal Education for Adults, 1961) ED 031663.
- ¹⁸Jack Fuller, "An In-Service Program for Adult Education Faculty," Adult Leadership 20(December, 1971), 205-206.
- ¹⁹L.W. Bender and J.O. Hammons, "Adjunct Faculty: Forgotten and Neglected," Community and Junior College Journal 43(October, 1972), 20-22; D.A. Harris and M.H. Parsons, Adjunct Faculty: A Working System of Development (Hagerstown, Maryland: Hagerstown Junior College, 1975) ED 115318.
- ²⁰Jack Magarrell, "Panel Says Government Should Help Universities Hire Young Scientists," Chronicle of Higher Education, October 29, 1979, pp. 1, 10.
- ²¹Bonnie Sanchez, About Staff Evaluation: A Brief Highlighting Important Literature Since 1966 On Community College Staff Evaluation (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1977) ED 158799.
- ²²David Fellows, An Evaluation Plan for Part-Time Faculty in Community/Junior Colleges (Ed. D. Dissertation, Nova University, 1975) ED 733009.
- ²³Maher and Ebben, p. 79.